



2026 Census topic consultation - Phase two

Closed 8 Sep 2023

Opened 27 Jul 2023

Contact

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Feedback updated 12 Dec 2023

We asked

From 27 July to 8 September 2023, the ABS undertook phase two of the 2026 Census topic consultation. This consultation invited feedback on proposed changes to Census topics.

During this consultation, the ABS specifically sought feedback on topics where further information was required to help inform our assessment and recommendation. These topics included:

- Ancestry and Ethnic identity
- Labour Force status
- Main language other than English used at home
- Number of children ever born
- Number of employees (employed by owner managers)
- Number of motor vehicles
- Religious affiliation
- Status in employment
- Unpaid work – domestic activities

You said

The ABS received 213 submissions in this consultation. The submissions were received via the ABS Consultation Hub and email from all levels of government,

businesses, community groups, advocacy groups, industry bodies/associations, academics and individuals. Twelve submissions received during the consultation window had multiple individuals and/or organisations contributing to the submission.

Of the topics the ABS specifically sought feedback on, the most common topic included in submissions was Religious affiliation, followed by Ancestry and Ethnic identity. While the ABS advised that feedback was not required for other shortlisted topics, there was an option in the Consultation Hub to provide feedback if desired. The most common topics included in submissions where feedback was not specifically requested were Gender, Sex, Sexual orientation, Variations of sex characteristics, and Attendance at an educational institution.

Some submissions suggested content that was out of scope of the phase two consultation. This included topics that were requested in the first phase of public consultation but were not shortlisted, new topics not previously requested, and submissions that were related to other ABS data collections or Census collection procedures. These submissions have been referred to the relevant areas of the ABS for further consideration where relevant.

We did

- During phase two of the consultation, the ABS assessed 32 topics for addition, change or removal.
- 17 topics, including 5 new topics and 12 existing topics, have progressed to the development and testing stage.
- Three topics are still under consideration for removal.
- One topic will be recommended to move back to a ten-year collection cycle and be collected again in the 2031 Census.

The ABS has published outcomes from the public consultation. The publication [2026 Census topic review: Phase two directions](#) is available on the ABS website.

Where to from here?

The ABS will continue to refine the shortlist of potential content changes during the development and testing stage, prior to making a recommendation to Government in mid-2024.

The ABS will publish the final list of topics on the ABS website in late 2025.

Published responses

[View submitted responses](#) where consent has been given to publish the

response.

Overview

The ABS is undertaking a review of topics for the 2026 Census. Public consultation helps inform our recommendation to the Australian Government on the topics that could be included in the Census.

Phase two of the consultation is open from 27 July until 8 September 2023. The ABS is seeking feedback on topics being considered for change or removal from the 2026 Census.

Assessment criteria

During this phase, the ABS will continue to assess shortlisted topics against the following criteria:

1. The topic is of current national importance.
2. There is a need for data at the national level, and either the local level or for small population groups.
3. There is likely to be a continuing need for data on the topic following the Census.
4. There are no other suitable alternative data sources or solutions that could meet the topic need.

Shortlisted topics will be assessed for feasibility and to determine if the Census is the most appropriate way to provide data on the topic. The following criteria are used to make this assessment:

5. Data on the topic can be collected efficiently.
6. A representative of the household would be willing and able to answer questions on the topic for each member of the household.

In addition to assessing the topics individually, the ABS will consider if the combination of topics will maintain a high level of public support for the Census. This includes the overall size and complexity of the Census form, sensitivity of collecting data on the topic, and if collecting data on a topic will impact how the public answers questions on other topics.

Not all shortlisted topics will proceed to testing or be included in the 2026 Census.

See the [detailed assessment criteria](#) for our considerations for each criterion.

How to make a submission

To prepare your submission:

- Review the [2026 Census topic review: Phase one directions](#) publication.
- Consider the [2026 Census topic assessment criteria](#).
- Connect with other individuals or organisations who may want to collaborate with you on a submission.

Under the **Related** section below, a Submission Guide is attached providing detailed instructions about how to make a submission. A downloadable version of the consultation questionnaire is also available.

Once you begin your submission, if you would like to save and return to your response later you will be prompted to enter your email address. You will be provided with a Return link and Response ID. Please note these down in case the email doesn't come through promptly.

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What happens next

This consultation has now closed.

In late 2023, the ABS will share the outcomes of phase two, including the topics proceeding to testing and the topics that will be recommended for removal.

In mid-2024 the ABS will make a recommendation to the Australian Government on the topics that could be included in the 2026 Census.

You can find further information about the [2026 Census topic review](#) process

on the ABS website.

Related

 [2026 Census topic consultation - Phase two - Download version.docx](#)

151.3 KB (Office Word 2007 XML document)

 [Submission Guide - 2026 Census topic consultation phase two.pdf](#)

327.7 KB (PDF document)

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